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Senator Tom Coburn
Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management
Government Information and International Security
Attn: Anna Shopen
439 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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Dear Senator Coburn:

I write in response to your letter of 27 July requesting information on federal appropriations for The University of Montana. At The University of Montana, we take great pride in the federally supported research activities that have grown to over \$66 million per year. The faculty researchers obtain the vast majority of this funding in open and peer-reviewed competition from agencies such as the National Institutes Health and the National Science Foundation. These faculty researchers conduct cutting-edge scientific work, creating new scientific knowledge while preparing the next generation of scientific leaders. In addition, their work has led to new intellectual property that stimulates economic growth in Montana.

However, as a small institution in state with a small population, we have many unmet needs in terms of research infrastructure. To deal with that need, we have on a regular basis asked our Congressional Delegation to help us so that we better serve the students, business, and citizens of Montana that depend on a well equipped and well staffed University. Through the direct appropriation process, our Delegation has assisted us to develop our strengths and to deliver high quality federally sponsored programs while also improving the research infrastructure of the University.

We follow a rigorous process prior to seeking direct appropriations that involves review by our Deans and Vice President for Research. In brief, we reach a decision about the importance of the project to the University before presenting any request to our Congressional Delegation. Our internal criteria used to evaluate potential direct appropriations include: How the proposed appropriation will improve our competitiveness for future federal awards; the potential economic impact of the project in Montana; how the project contributes to the national well being; and scientific merits of the project. We avoid the direct appropriation process when we have the opportunity to seek competitive funding. We take very seriously a decision to ask our Delegation for help. The University of Montana prides itself in its stewardship of federal funds and

**c: Senator Max Baucus
Senator Conrad Burns
Congressman Denny Rehberg**